

Minutes of the 05/17/05 Combined Board Meeting

Vice-President Mike Messenger called the meeting to order in Edmonds, WA at 7:30pm on May 17, 2005.

There was no quorum in attendance so no business could be conducted

Old business:

- None

New business:

- None

Wagonmaster's:

- Ed Lehman submitted the bill for our insurance. He has received confirmation that our insurance policy has been re-newed.
- Ed Lehman has heard rumors that the Department of Homeland Security has been installing electronic equipment at Saddle Mt. and Redtop. Apparently the roads are being worked on to allow large vehicles to access these sites. If anyone has actual information regarding the conditions of the roads and/or access to these areas, please contact Ed.
- Ed reported that we have been getting a big response to the First Creek field trip. He also reported that he has spoken to the landowner and there should be no restrictions on the number of cars going to the collecting sites. There may however, be restrictions due to fire danger. Be sure to contact the field trip leaders prior to the field trip for the latest information. Ed announced that there will be a limit on the number of thunder eggs person in order for everyone to be able to take home material. Ed also reported that he and Bob O'Brien have discovered several more collecting sites in the First Creek area that will produce plenty of nice agate.
- Ed has received indications from the landowners of First Creek and Kalama that they are starting to feel that the rockhounds are becoming pests. This is based on the fact that several clubs and individuals have been requesting keys to these areas. This happens several times a year for each group and it is becoming a real chore for the landowners. For instance, if 6 clubs ask these landowners for access twice a year, that's 12 times they have to issue a key, check insurance references, check in a key, and possibly check the area that was accessed. This means they could be going through this procedure a couple of times a month. All of the clubs should strive to co-ordinate their field trips to these popular areas to minimize the impact on the landowners. Perhaps doing joint field trips like small scale versions of one of the Wagonmaster trips. It is in all of our best interest to be sensitive to this situation or we may find that we will no longer be allowed into these areas.
- Ed reported that the North Seattle club has been running a program at Children's Hospital for over 25 years in which they involve the sick children in activities such as cabbng stones for pendants and other jewelry. The kids really look forward to this activity as a real treat. At least three volunteers from the club are at the hospital for 2 hours every Tuesday afternoon. The North Seattle club is to be commended for their community spirit by giving these children a brief respite from their illnesses. If there are any other clubs out there doing similar things in the community please let us know. We'd like to spread the word on your good work.

Meeting adjourned,
Submitted by Glenn Morita

Earthquake Aftershocks Predicted in Real-Time

18 May 2005

NewScientist.com news service

Celeste Biever

The best tool yet for forecasting when and where earthquake aftershocks could occur has been devised by the US Geological Survey.

The freely-available map went online on Wednesday. It displays the probability of the ground shaking significantly over the next 24 hours for any 5-kilometer-square area of California following the "mainshock" of a quake.

It updates itself hourly. But checking every hour would not tell paranoid Californians much, says Mark Zoback, a geophysicist at Stanford University in Palo Alto, US, as predicting a main earthquake remains beyond its grasp. The map uses patterns in the initial aftershocks that follow big quakes to forecast when and where more will strike, so it is unlikely to forecast the first of a series of quakes.

For example, it would have shown only a very slight increase in the probability of ground-shaking just before the 1989 San Francisco quake that killed 63 people, says Matt Gerstenberger, who created the map along with colleagues at the USGS in Pasadena, California and at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in Zurich.

The map's real value lies in the hours, days, months and possibly even years following a big quake. "It's telling us that it's not over. That's of great value," says Zoback.

Scary intensity

He points out that an aftershock can be as damaging as the initial shock, particularly if buildings were weakened but not destroyed the first time around. People can use the map before deciding whether they can re-enter a dangerous structure or start shifting rubble, he says.

The map is tailor-made for human use as it only flags the probabilities of aftershocks with a force of 6 or more on the Modified Mercalli Intensity scale. "At that level things will fall off shelves, furniture will move and people will be scared," says Gerstenberger.

The USGS already calculates the probabilities of earthquakes occurring within a given 30-year period, which insurers use to calculate their rates, and constructors use to decide when to reinforce buildings and bridges. And since 1989 geologists have also used an equation that forecasts the probability of aftershocks based on the main shock.

But now Gerstenberger has shown that combining data from the sequence of immediate aftershocks and their frequency and magnitude gives a more accurate picture that changes in real time. And for the first time they have mapped aftershock predictions to specific points on the ground.

A similar aftershock forecast system could be set up in other countries, provided they have a similar network of underground seismometers to harvest the information, such as Japan, says Gerstenberger

History of Wirewrapping

by M. H. Case, Sr.

Wire wrap jewelry has recently gained popularity among all groups of peoples. For a small investment, any person can have a unique piece of wearable artwork. Bold, angular designs or smooth flowing curves can change a common gemstone into an heirloom. Ancient Phoenicians are credited with the creation of wire wrap jewelry, but the art goes back nearly 1,000 years earlier.

In the Biblical record, detailed instructions are given to Moses to construct the tabernacle and the priestly garments and attire, including Aaron's breastplate. In Exodus gems are listed; sardius (ruby), topaz, carbuncle, emerald, sapphire, diamond, jacinth, agate, amethyst, beryl, onyx and jasper. All were to be set in gold filigree.

Filigree was gold or silver hammered into thin sheets, then cut into thin strips and the edges filed smooth, thus making wire. The wire was woven into a basket or filigree and set into the breastplate. Later in Exodus, more detailed instructions were given about setting other gemstones into the rest of the priestly garments. Biblical scholars have placed this event near 1446 BC, nearly 1,000 years ahead of the Phoenicians.

There was a change in the Egyptian sarcophagus around 1900 BC, about the time that Joseph traveled to Egypt and brought his family there to avoid the famine in Israel. A sarcophagus was layered with fine sheets of gold prior to that time, but about 1900 to 1800 BC the sarcophagus changed to include woven strands of gold and silver, suggesting that the Hebrew artists brought this art form to their new homeland.

Wire was produced this way through the rise of the Phoenician empire. Phoenician culture thrived on arts and performance. As a semi-nomadic group of people, they took their art forms across the known world. At the height of the Phoenician Empire from 1250-500 BC their jewelry was prized throughout the world. When the Greek navy came to power, the Phoenician trade started to dwindle and finally was engulfed totally by the rise of the Roman Empire. Although Roman culture was to absorb other art and cultural ideas into their own, the wire wrap art was abandoned for more traditional silversmith techniques.

The earliest reference to drawn wire was in the 8th century in France. During the Medieval period, knights brought wire back to England to make chains and mail for their armor. Gold and silver wire were drawn in France and transported back to England. The earliest mention of wire introduced in England was 1465. Wire wrapping was limited to fastening crucifixes and other religious symbols to lanyards and chains.

During the late 1800's the Bohemian culture used wire to string chips of polished glass and stone beads to make necklaces and bracelets. This was popular among the European aristocracy for nearly 50 years. These hand-forged chains were so popular that if you were found not to have an authentic Bohemian piece of jewelry, you were shunned and scorned.

From 1837 to 1901 in the Victorian Age, the most popular pieces of jewelry were the cameo. Wire art combined the two most popular forms of jewelry of the time: sculpture and cameo. The truest form of wire art sculpture has only recently been seen as artists introduce this art form into almost every culture of America. Hundreds of artists now create rings, pendants, pins, hair barrettes, brooches, bracelets and stick pins. Modern wire artists combine gemstones, beads, antiques and even mineral specimens with gold, silver and gold—filled wire. Some artist even combine different types of metal for even more unique work.

from E-Tumbler, 05/05; via Gneiss Times, 2/05; via Rock Scoop, 2/04; from Calumet Gems, 11/03

Are Some Colored Gemstones Only Half Precious?

The gemstone industry and culture has always been dominated by the “big three” colored gemstones, that is ruby, emerald, and sapphire. These gemstones have always been the most popular and the market for these stones is different than the market for other colored gemstones in many ways. When other gemstone varieties began to be popular, the jewelry industry got tired of calling them “Colored Gemstones other than Ruby, Emerald, and Sapphire”. People needed a term to distinguish these other gemstones from the big three, since all of them could be called colored gemstones. Unfortunately, the term that was made up was “semi-precious” since the big three were called precious stones, along with the diamond gemstones. The term precious gemstones probably came from the French term, “pierres precieuse”. Unfortunately, the French terminology was not followed for the other gemstones or they would probably referred to as “fine gemstones”, which is much better than the “semi” word.

The problem with semi-precious, and the reason why the jewelry industry has banned its use is that it is quite misleading. Rubies, emeralds, and sapphires often sell for less than \$100 per carat, where a fine “Paraiba Tourmaline” for example might sell for \$20,000 per carat. That seems pretty precious, doesn't it? Despite the fact that everyone in the jewelry industry now agrees that the term semi-precious is not fair, there is still the need for a name to call all the other colored gemstone varieties other than ruby, emerald, or sapphire. Semi-precious always seems to have a way of creeping back into the vocabulary.

But we should not give up the fight! Let us give all these other fine, less well known colored gemstones varieties their due, and let us all stop calling them semi-precious.

from The Crystal and Gem News 05/05 via The Gem Examiner March/April 2005.

Gold Trivia

Gold is one of the most recycled substances of all. It's quite possible that the gold contained in the first nuggets found over 6,000 years ago still exist today, melted and recast into a contemporary piece of jewelry or as the filling in your teeth. Worldwide, wedding rings are probably the single biggest gold jewelry item. One of the traditions of the wedding ring on the third finger, left hand, is found in ancient Egyptian writings that describes the third finger as being connected by an artery to the heart. The innermost coffin of the three used to bury the young Egyptian Pharaoh Tutankhamen is probably the biggest gold object to have survived from antiquity. Uncovered in 1922, it represents 2,448 pounds of 22 karat gold, decorated inside and out.

In the western world, the proportion of gold is expressed in karats, using a scale of 24 karats as being 100% pure gold. If a piece of jewelry is made of 18 karat gold, it is 18 parts gold and 6 parts other metal, usually silver or copper. Gold is one of the most ductile and malleable of all metals. One ounce can be stretched into a wire five miles long or in a sheet so thin it covers 100 square feet. Gold has extremely low resistance to electric current, and won't corrode or tarnish. A touch tone telephone has 33 gold contacts.

From Petrified Digest 03/05, via Pebble Trails 02/05, via Hygrader 01/05